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Japan

Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards

Japan to Ban Polyvinyl Chloride Food Packaging Containing Di (2-ethylhexyl) Phthalate 2002

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Report Highlights:

Because of potential human health risks of di (2-ethylhexyl) phthalate (DEHP) as an endocrine disrupter, effective August 1, 2003, the Japanese government will ban the use of polyvinyl chloride (PVC) which contains DEHP for food packaging.

Includes PSD changes: No

Includes Trade Matrix: No

Unscheduled Report

Tokyo [JA1], JA

As of August 1, 2003, the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (MHLW) of the Japanese government will ban the use of polyvinyl chloride (PVC) containing di (2-ethylhexyl) phthalate (DEHP) when used as a "component of any apparatus, container, or package for foods containing fats/oils and oily foods," in short, for food packaging.

MHLW will also ban the use of PVC containing DEHP as a component of toys. The ban will not affect PVC that does not include DEHP. PVC containing diisononyl phthalate (DINP) will also be prohibited as a component of toys whose use includes being put in baby's mouths.

Below is unofficial translation of the relevant part of the MHLW regulatory announcement.

"For any apparatus, container or package contacting edible fats and oils and foods containing fats/oils, any synthetic resin using polyvinyl chloride as a major component including di(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate as an ingredient may not be used. However, this does not apply in cases that the containers that are processed as no di(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate elutes or immerses to foods."

The "apparatus, container or package contacting foods" include those directly contact foods, such as packaging used to contain or transport foods and hand globes to prepare foods.

The "edible fats and foods containing fats/oils" is defined as "foods except for dried solid foods that contain over around 20 % fats and oils in or on the surface of the foods" that include lard, vegetable oil, ham, bacon, beef, pork, chocolate, potato chips, tempura (dressed fried foods), fried tofu, fried surimi, croquettes, cutlets, mayonnaise, salad dressings, cheese, butter, hamburger stakes, deep fried fish, beef stew, curry and rice, sautéed vegetables, potato salad, donuts, cakes, cookies, and foods containing oils and fats.

For imports, MHLW issued the following guidance.

"It is necessary to confirm that the apparatus, container or package, or toy, made of resin using PVC as a major component does not use DEHP or DINP as a raw material.

If the above cannot be confirmed, such a packaging material or toy must be tested and accompany the testing results.

It is also necessary to confirm that DEHP do not elute from the apparatus, container or package made of resin using PVC as a major component.

If the above cannot be confirmed, such a packaging material must be tested and accompany the testing results.